Alberta
CAREER DEVELOPMENT
AND EMPLOYMENT
Immigration and
Settlement

IMMIGRATION TO ALBERTA

(OVERVIEW FROM 1984 TO 1988)

OCTOBER 1989

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this overview is to provide a summary of information regarding immigration in Alberta. This is an update of a similar overview published in September, 1988. The information for this overview is provided by the Labour Market Research Division of Alberta Career Development and Employment. Much of the data was taken from the Immigration Records (IMM1000 system) of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. Unless otherwise stated, tables and charts are based on calendar years. The data for 1988 is preliminary and subject to revision.

The Immigration and Settlement Branch of Alberta Career Development and Employment has the primary provincial mandate for immigration and settlement issues in Alberta. This includes funding support for community based immigrant aid organizations, the administration of provincial responsibilities in the Business Immigration Program, funding for specialized English as a Second Language training, and the development of informational materials for prospective immigrants and newcomers.

If you have any comments or suggestions for changes in future overviews, please contact:

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Immigration and Settlement Branch
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After February, 1990 this address will change to:

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Immigration and Settlement Branch
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10155 - 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 4L5

I. ALBERTA'S POPULATION

Every sixth resident in Alberta is a first generation immigrant. The 1986 Census showed that 368,000 (15.7%) of the 2.3 million people in the province were born outside of Canada. In Edmonton and Calgary, where most of the recent immigrants have settled, about 20% of all residents are foreign born.

The "ethnic origin" section of the 1986 Census indicates that the majority of Albertans trace their ancestry to the following ten groups:

British	1,199,300	(51.2%)
German	183,000	(7.8%)
French	123,000	(5.3%)
Ukrainian	107,000	(4.6%)
Dutch	55,300	(2.4%)
Aboriginal People*	51,670	(2.2%)
Chinese	49,200	(2.1%)
Scandinavian	49,200	(2.1%)
South Asian (Indo-Pakistani)	30,100	(1.3%)
Polish	28,500	(1.2%)
TOTAL		(79.9%)

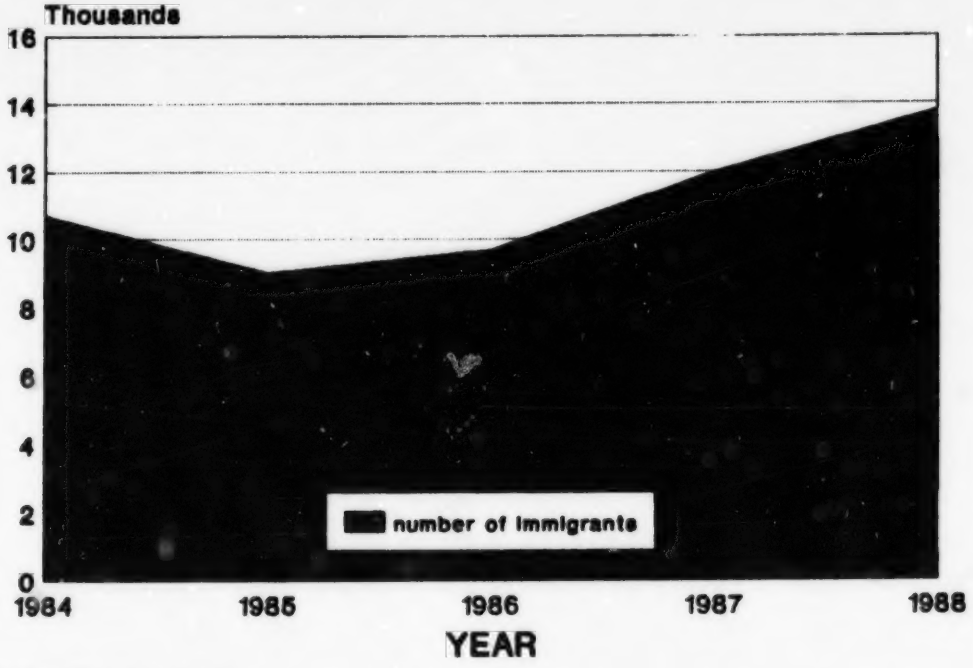
* This group includes those of the single origins of Inuit, North American Indian and Metis. Although this number includes the Metis population, other sources indicate this number may be significantly larger.

An additional 173,300 (7.4%), traced their ethnic origin, at least in part, to either British or French ancestry, and another 12,000 people specified Native Indian as part of their ancestry.

II. IMMIGRATION TO ALBERTA

Since the beginning of 1984 over 55,000 new immigrants have arrived in Alberta. Annual immigration levels have increased from 10,670 in 1984 to 13,785 in 1988, with an annual immigration average of over 11,000. The peak year for immigration to Alberta in this decade was 1982 with 18,000 new arrivals, including many Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees. Recently Alberta has experienced a large scale family re-unification movement as additional family members join refugees who arrived in the late seventies and early eighties. Although the percentage of Vietnamese immigrants remains high, Hong Kong has become the number one source country for immigrants coming to Alberta. The numbers of Eastern European, and South and Central American immigrants and refugees have also increased.

IMMIGRATION TO ALBERTA 1984 - 1988



• 1988 data is preliminary

Figure 1

III. SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS OF ALBERTA'S IMMIGRANT POPULATION

A. COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN:
(Top Ten Source Countries for 1988 Immigrants)

Hong Kong	2227	16.2%
Vietnam	1110	8.1%
India	905	6.6%
Brunei	810	5.9%
Philippines	760	5.5%
Poland	688	5.0%
England	659	4.8%
El Salvador	439	3.2%
Iran	325	2.4%
Kampuchea	310	2.2%
TOTAL		59.7%

B. KNOWLEDGE OF CANADIAN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

There has been an increase in Canadian language capabilities in recent years. In 1984, 39% of all immigrants had some knowledge of a Canadian official language and this number increased to 47% in 1988. However, many of these individuals listed as having English or French need further instruction before they are able to function in the job market. As the number of immigrants coming to Canada increases, the demand for English language training intensifies.

C. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

The level of education among immigrants has increased in recent years. In 1980, 27% of immigrants had some post-secondary education, while in 1988, that number rose to over 35%. However, since education varies greatly in length and content in other countries, educational levels and vocational training may not necessarily be recognized as Canadian equivalencies.

D. EMPLOYMENT

A Statistics Canada survey conducted in November 1987 indicates that 59% of immigrants over the age of 15 were employed, 8% were unemployed, and 33% were not actively participating in the Alberta labour force. Of those who found employment, 25% were in service occupations and another 12% were in occupations in the management and administration category. These statistics reflect the employment status of both recent and settled immigrants.

E. AGE GROUPS AND GENDER

The table on page 6 represents the age distribution of Alberta's 1988 immigrants according to their gender. The ratio of females to males has not significantly changed in recent years. In 1988, 52% of immigrants were women and 48% were men, and 45.5% of all immigrants were in the 24-44 age group.

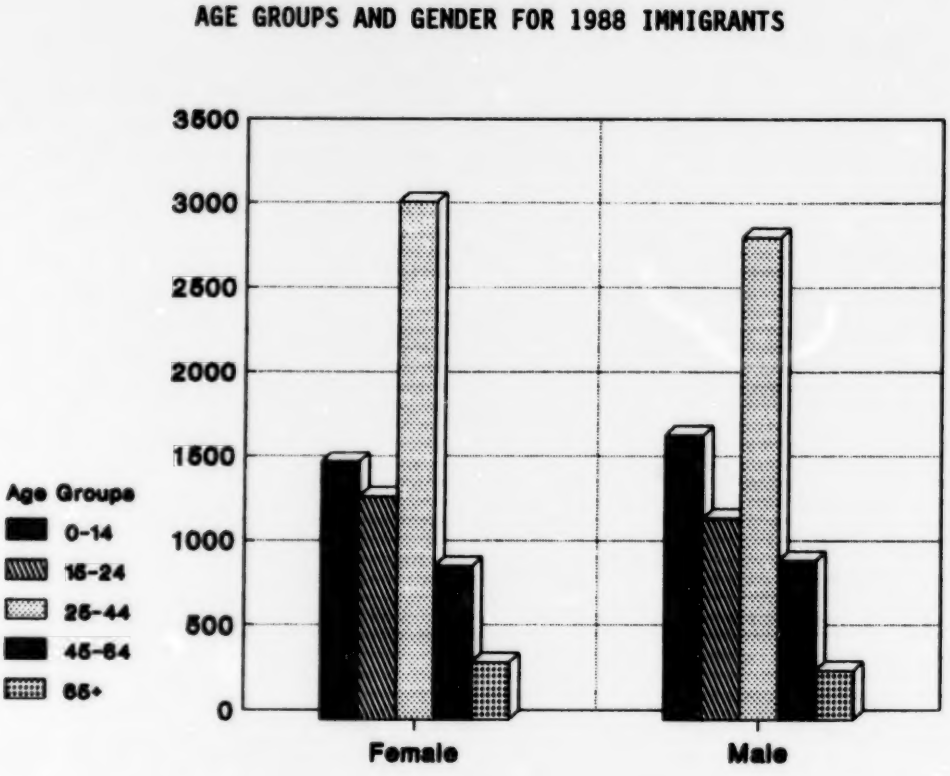


Figure 2

IV. IMMIGRATION CLASSES

The Canada Immigration Act has established three basic classes of admissible immigrants. These classes are the Family Class, Convention Refugee Class, and the Independent Class.

A. THE FAMILY CLASS

Canadian citizens and permanent residents can sponsor certain close relatives who want to immigrate to Canada. The percentage of Family Class immigrants has been decreasing in recent years. In 1983, 5,602 Family Class immigrants represented 52.4% of total immigration to Alberta, while in 1988, 4,254 people arrived to join their families in Alberta, accounting for 30.9% of the total immigration.

B. REFUGEE CLASS

1. Definitions

The definition of the refugee class has been adapted from the United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. A Convention refugee is "any person who by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, (a) is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, by reason of such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or (b) not having a country of nationality, is outside the country of his habitual residence and is unable or, by reason of fear, is unwilling to return to that country."

Canada also recognizes a Designated Class. These individuals are those displaced by emergency situations and those whom the Government of Canada is willing to accept for humanitarian reasons.

2. Re-settlement of Refugees

Around the world there are millions of refugees and displaced persons. Their numbers are increasing as a consequence of war, revolution, political and racial persecution, drought and famine. The actual number of refugees is difficult to determine. Many do not register or seek formal asylum. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that in 1988 the number of refugees world wide was fourteen million. In 1984, the estimate was ten million.

The five major areas of refugee concentrations are Latin America, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The top five re-settlement countries are the United States, Canada, Australia, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany. Out of the 26,545 refugees accepted by Canada in 1988, Alberta received 3,173 (11.9%), representing nearly 23% of Alberta's total immigration.

C. INDEPENDENT CLASS AND OTHER IMMIGRANTS

The third class of immigrants includes assisted relatives, retirees, business immigrants and other independent immigrants who apply on their own. These individuals are selected on the basis of a point system.

1. Assisted Relatives

This group includes all those relatives not eligible under the family class. In 1988, 8.7% of Alberta's immigrants were assisted relatives. The yearly average from 1984 to 1988 was 9.7%.

2. Retirees

The percentage of retired individuals immigrating has remained under 1% for the past several years.

3. Business Immigrants

Until recently this group remained under 5%. Their numbers, including dependents, dropped from over 535 in 1982, to a low of 245 in 1985. In 1987, the number rose to 549 and in 1988 there was a further increase to 769, or 5.6% of all immigrants to Alberta for that year.

Of the applicants in the Entrepreneurs and Self-employed categories of the Business Immigration Program approved to immigrate to Canada, Alberta ranks fourth as the province of destination, behind Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia. In 1988, 182 visas were issued representing a projected job creation of 469, a job retention of 120 and a total of $25,639,017 available for investment.

In the Investor category, 12 Specific Projects and Privately Administered Investment Syndicates were designated in 1988 representing a potential investment of $42,750,000 in Alberta.

4. Other Independents

The number of independent immigrants has incresed over the past few years. In 1984, 10.3% of all Alberta's immigrants were in this category, while in 1988, this percentage had increased to 31.8%. Independent immigrants are expected to be self-supporting immediately requiring no more than minimal settlement assistance.

5. The Point System

Anyone applying to be admitted into Canada as a permanent residence, who does not have a close relative living in Canada, is classified as an "independent" and is rated by Canadian immigration officials on the basis of a point system. The total number of points which an applicant can receive is 100. The number of points required to qualify for entry is 70.

How many points an applicant accumulates depends on individual circumstances. For instance, if a relative in Canada has submitted an undertaking of assistance on the applicant's behalf 10 - 15 (bonus) points may be earned, depending on the relationship. Before an immigration visa will be issued, the sponsoring relatives in Canada must prove they have enough resources to provide lodging, care and maintenance for the applicant and accompanying dependents. In another circumstance, a business man or woman who qualifies under the Business

Immigration Program automatically receives 45 (bonus) points towards the 70 points needed.

Additional points are accumulated on the basis of factors such as education, age, language ability, specific vocational preparation and Canadian demand for the applicant's employment skills.

V. ASSISTANCE FOR NEW IMMIGRANTS TO ALBERTA

Federal and provincial governments, as well as community organizations, provide immigrants with specialized services, programs, and informational materials. Only refugees sponsored by the Government of Canada receive direct financial assistance (up to 12 months, or until the head of the family has found employment). Refugees must pay back, in full, any government loans covering passage to Canada, tenants' damage deposit, and other expenses related to initial settlement. All other immigrants are expected to pay their own way with help from their families or with assistance from private sponsors.

A. Alberta's Response

The Immigration and Settlement Branch of Alberta Career Development and Employment has the primary provincial responsibility for immigration and settlement issues in Alberta.

1. Immigration Programs

Information and counselling services are provided regarding economic and social immigration to Alberta. Assistance is available to Alberta residents, Alberta businesses and employers, and prospective immigrants. Elements of provincial immigration responsibilities include administration of the Business Immigration Program, information for employers related to labour force recruiting, international exchange programs and foreign worker movements, and the Alberta Immigration Review Panel.

2. Settlement Programs

Provincial government support, primarily through grants and program development assistance, is provided to community based immigrant aid organizations as part of the Integrated Service Program (ISP), a partnership among the federal and provincial governments and the volunteer sector.

3. English as Second Language Secretariat

The English as a Second Language Secretariat co-ordinates policy and activities concerning language training for adult immigrants in Alberta; collects and analyzes data on ESL programming and funding issues; and administers grants to organizations and institutions which are involved in ESL assessment, referral and instruction.

4. Informational Materials

A variety of publications have been developed which provide information to prospective and new immigrants and are available in several languages.

B. Community Response

1. Immigrant Aid Organizations

Community-based immigrant aid organizations are active in many Alberta communities. Their purpose is to directly assist newcomers, in non-monetary ways, to become settled in Alberta. These organizations provide orientation to life in Alberta, interpretation and translation services, general counselling, and assistance in finding accommodation and employment.

In addition to the clients serviced by paid staff, during the 1988/89 fiscal year, volunteers in funded immigrant aid organizations contributed more than 99,000 hours in response to over 20,000 requests for assistance.

2. Sponsorship

Private groups and organizations in Alberta play a large role in providing re-settlement assistance for refugees. If any group or organization decides to sponsor a refugee or a refugee family, their duties begin the day the refugees arrive in the community and continue for one year. The responsibilities the groups have to the refugee they sponsor include material assistance, and emotional and financial support. Material assistance involves the sponsor providing the refugee with furnished accommodation, food, clothing, and household and incidental effects. Although the sponsors have financial responsibility for refugees, the refugee can receive Unemployment Insurance benefits if they qualify. These refugees are not eligible for welfare support for their first twelve months in Canada. Emotional and moral support from the sponsoring group is vital to the re-settlement of the refugees into their new community.

Information on group sponsorship is available from local Canada Immigration Centres.

IMMIGRATION TO ALBERTA BY IMMIGRATION CLASS
1984 TO 1988

CATEGORY	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	TOTAL
Convention Refugee & Designated	2,397 22.5%	2,480 27.5%	2,648 27.4%	2,634 22.0%	3,173 23.0%	13,332 24.2%
Family	5,409 50.6%	4,180 46.4%	4,489 46.4%	4,837 40.4%	4,254 30.9%	23,169 42.0%
Assisted Relatives	1,375 12.9%	997 11.1%	592 6.1%	1,160 9.7%	1,206 8.7%	5,330 9.7%
Entrepreneurs, Self-Employed and Investors	398 3.7%	245 2.8%	467 4.8%	565 4.7%	769 5.6%	2,444 4.4%
Other Independents	1,091 10.3%	1,099 12.3%	1,477 15.3%	2,779 23.2%	4,383 31.8%	10,829 19.7%
TOTALS	10,670 100%	9,001 100%	9,673 100%	11,975 100%	13,785 100%	55,104 100%

Figure 3

IMMIGRATION TO MAJOR COMMUNITIES IN ALBERTA BETWEEN 1984 - 1988

COMMUNITY	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	TOTAL
Calgary	4,535 42.5%	3,669 40.8%	4,152 42.9%	5,104 42.6%	5659 41.1	23,119 42.1%
Edmonton	4,279 40.1%	3,694 41.0%	3,881 40.1%	4,968 41.5%	6,004 43.5%	22,826 41.2%
Fort McMurray	117 1.1%	100 1.1%	109 1.1%	156 1.3%	185 1.3%	667 1.2%
Lethbridge	256 2.4%	253 2.8%	215 2.2%	286 2.4%	298 2.2%	1,308 2.4%
Medicine Hat	160 1.5%	155 1.7%	172 1.8%	165 1.4%	177 1.3	829 1.5%
Red Deer	245 2.3%	231 2.6%	215 2.2%	255 2.1%	301 2.2%	1,247 2.3%
Grande Prairie	** **	** **	** **	127 1.1%	112 0.8%	239 1.9%
Other	1,078 10.3%	899 10.0%	929 9.6%	914 7.6%	1,049* 7.6%	4,869 8.8%
TOTAL	10,670 100%	9,001 100%	9,673 100%	11,975 100%	13,785 100%	55,104 100%

* This figure includes 66 to Camrose, 11 to Wetaskiwin, 9 to Edson, 25 to Ponoka, 10 to Lloydminster, 3 to Grande Centre, 28 to Lacombe and 5 to Vegreville.

** Figures for Grande Prairie included in Other

Figure 4

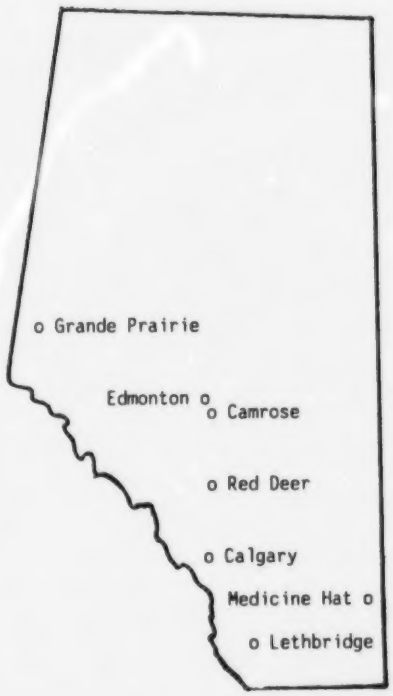
IMMIGRANT AID ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED BY ALBERTA IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

EDMONTON IMMIGRANT SERVICES ASSOCIATION
Cromdale School
11240 - 79 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5B 2K1
474-8445

ST. BARNABAS REFUGEE SOCIETY
400, 10136 - 100 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 0P1
428-7094

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
Immigration and Settlement Services
10420 - 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 0W1
424-3545

EDMONTON MENNONITE CENTRE FOR ASSISTANCE OF NEWCOMERS
202, 10830 - 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 0X2
424-7709, 7714, 1150



CHANGING TOGETHER-A CENTRE FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN
209, 10010 - 107A Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 4H8
421-0175

CALGARY IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY
900A - 825 - 8th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 2T3
265-1120

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
#3, 4908 - 50 Street
Camrose,Alberta
T4V 1R1
672-1304

CALGARY CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION SOCIETY
1916 - 2nd Street, S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2S 1S3
245-8800

CENTRAL ALBERTA REFUGEE EFFORT COMMITTEE (CARE)
202, 5000 Gaetz Avenue
Red Deer, Alberta
T4N 4B2
346-8818

CALGARY IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S CENTRE
802-14th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2R 0N6
245-6785

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
202, 5000 Gaetz Avenue
Red Deer, Alberta
T4N 4B2
346-7055

SAAMIS IMMIGRATION SERVICES ASSOCIATION
422 - 6th Street S.E.
Medicine Hat, Alberta
T1A 1H5
529 0700

LETHBRIDGE IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION
506 - 4th Avenue
Lethbridge, Alberta
T1J 0N3
327-5333

PEACE AREA SETTLEMENT SERVICES SOCIETY
10118 - 101 Avenue
Grande Prairie, Alberta
T8V 0Y2
538-1322